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SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS CALLS FOR ENHANCED SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMUNITY IN METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY'S GRADE CROSSING POLICY

LOS ANGELES — Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas urged fellow Metro board members Thursday to give greater weight to safety and neighborhood concerns when building train crossings at street level, rather than underground or above-ground.

Proposed street-level, or at-grade, train crossings have been hotly disputed in some communities, including neighborhoods around Dorsey High School and Overland Avenue Elementary School along the Expo Light Rail line currently under construction. Residents in those areas have objected to the prospect of trains running at street-level close to schools and homes.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas introduced a motion at Thursday's Metro Board of Directors meeting to enhance the consideration of safety issues in the MTA Grade Crossing Policy for Light Rail. The Supervisor's motion would first change the name of the policy to "MTA Grade Crossing Safety Policy."

The amended policy would require an analysis of the impact of street-level trains on schools, parks and other areas of high pedestrian activity. This requirement will allow greater community input and allow greater consideration of more subjective neighborhood considerations.

"Those who may soon have trains running next to their homes and schools need additional ways to have their voices heard. The numerical traffic calculations that define

the current policy must be supplemented by the real-world impacts that community residents will have to live with everyday,” Ridley-Thomas said.

Along with safety measures, the Ridley-Thomas motion would require analysis of street-level rail on future economic impact. “A train on a street can increase foot-traffic for businesses, or if done poorly, can actually make a street undesirable to commercial development. “The new policy would ensure grade crossing decisions accommodate, rather than thwart, future economic development.”

The Metro Board is scheduled to vote on Ridley-Thomas’ proposal on October 28.

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